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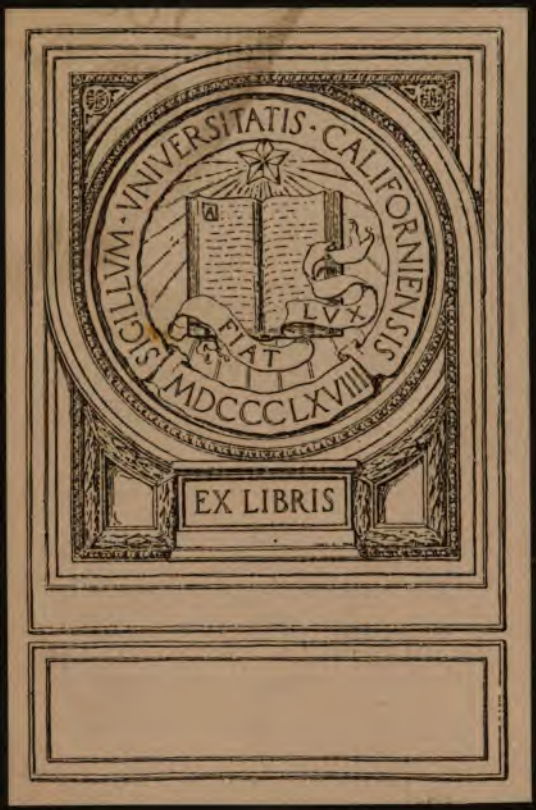
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Bridging the Atlantic

A Discussion of the Problems and Methods of Americanization

by

Professor Sarka B. Hrbkova

Member of Nebraska State Council of Defense
and
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FOREWORD

In response to many calls from various parts of the state for a discussion of the Immigrant problem, the address "Bridging The Atlantic" was presented to thirty or more Nebraska audiences by Professor Sarka Hrbkova. Later the address was amplified and extended into a series of talks on the various phases of the problem. The gist of these discussions, together with an appendix of recommendations looking to effective Americanization, is herewith presented.

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BRIDGING THE ATLANTIC

Contrary to what might be expected by this title, this is not to be a learned discourse on an impossible engineering feat, embracing such technical terms as masonry, abutments, cantilever, girders, beams, semi-elliptical aches, piers, etc. I couldn't define such terms if I wanted to. Engineering requires a knowledge of pure **mathematics.** The building of this special kind of bridge over the Atlantic involves only some simple calculations. For the education of a constructive engineer it is necessary to have a knowledge of **optics** and **drawing.** To erect the connecting structure between the European kind of civilization and the American kind—one must have **eyes** that see clearly, sympathetically, and you must **draw** right, just conclusions and not draw on prejudices.

It was one day when crossing from aft to fore of the monster ocean-liner on which we sailed back to America that some one facetiously remarked, "Well, one can practically walk dry shod from Europe to America. These long new ships are regular bridges, for by the time you get to the bow from the stern, she has touched the other shore." When I viewed and talked with some of the immigrants in the steerage and later with other passengers who rarely moved out of the luxurious Palm Garden or First Saloon end of the boat, my heart was a little heavy, for it seemed to me that from third cabin to first was leagues and leagues farther than from France to New York harbor.

When our boat again hove in sight of the First Lady of our Land, by which I mean the glorious Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island, it was one of the sweetest joys of my life to greet in reverent spirit this symbol of America. And then when I saw down below the thousands of immigrants crowding to the rail to catch their first glimpse of the Land of Promise—while the setting sun tinged goldenly the monster torch in the hand of Bartholdi's colossal figure, the hope came that America would indeed fulfill all the heart longings of these newcomers who had, to be sure, crossed the ocean, but still had ahead of them the yawning, unbridged chasm that separates the alien from the native born American.

There are two kinds of Americans—those who welcome the

420227

alien and those who would slam the toll-gates of the bridge in his face. Those who welcome the foreigner, see an opportunity for the highest expression here of what he brings across the bridge of the Atlantic as his contribution to American civilization. The others will maintain that the foreigner is wholly the gainer and the native American the loser by the invasion of the so-called "alien". There are certain people in America who always look askance at the newcomer—warily—cautious—lest some dire contagion be contracted. You have to be a foreigner or a descendant of a foreigner to get the benefit of that sort of attitude. It is like the small boy in school who was asked by his teacher, "Why do you scratch your head?" His answer was, "Because I'm the only one in the room who knows just where it itches." You see,—I know where it itches.

Nicknames for Foreigners

The attitude of those who would say it was a case of only receive and no give on the part of the immigrant is the attitude I would like to dispel. It is such people who regularly insult the descendants of Michel Angelo, Murillo, Columbus and the thousand other great Italians by calling them "Dagoes". It is such people who always call a Hebrew or Jew a "Sheeny", forgetting all about the race of Disraeli, Zangwill, and of the greatest Jew of all—Christ. They call a German a "Dutchy", a "Sauerkraut" or a "Limburger", never regarding the fact that Goethe, Frederick the Great, and Bismarck belonged to the so-called "Limburgers". When they call a Bohemian or Czech a "Bohunk", they never think that John Huss, the religious reformer and martyr who preceded Luther by over a century, Komensky or Comenius, the educator, Dvorak and Kubelik, musicians, were Bohemians or Czechs. To such people, all Irishmen are "Paddies", all Japanese, "Japs", all Chinese "Pigtails", and so on, ad nauseam. And yet those very people resent, and rightfully, hearing Americans called "Gringoes" by Mexicans, or "pigs" and "Americansche Schweine" by Germans.

The application of such sneering or slang terms never did and never will be an indication of the American gentleman or the American lady.

Justice

If we wish fair treatment for ourselves, we must first of all accord it to others. Emerson says, "If you want friends, be a friend." The burden of this plea today is not that you be generous to the foreigner, but that something better and finer than generosity be accorded him—and that is—justice. Justice is greater than generosity. We need to be just to him and just to America. We must concede, but he, too, must be fair and return service for advantages gained in this country.

And if today there is a nation on earth that possesses and fights for the principles of **justice** it is the United States. It is this sense of justice that is the real framework of the bridge across the Atlantic and it is sympathy and understanding that form the approaches and props of the spans of that bridge.

I have unmixed Slavic-Bohemian blood in my veins for at least 400 years back and I suppose, in a way, am as proud of it as you are that you are descended from the early defenders of the American commonwealth when it was not yet a nation. But I am far prouder of the fact that my people chose **this country**, these glorious United States, as the place in which to bring up their family. For it is here that fair play, a square deal, justice, is afforded to all.

Proportion of Foreign Born

Of our population of 110,000,000, one person out of every seven was born outside of the United States; one out of every three was foreign born or of foreign parentage. In other words, there are over 13,000,000 persons of foreign birth and over 20,000,000 of foreign parentage. Fully one-third of our total population is of foreign born stock. Of the 33,000,000 persons of foreign birth or foreign stock in the United States, 31.1% are English or Celtic; 28.5% are Germanic; 13.3% are Latin or Greek; 10.1% are Slavic or Lettic; 9% are Scandinavian; 7.1% are unclassified; 1% are unknown.

Germany and its political and military leaders counted on this very heterogenity of our population as a source of strength to themselves and as a fertile field for their disrupting propaganda. They figured that the conglomeration which makes up

America had no cohesion and would disintegrate when attacked. Von Bernhardi was cock sure that since the Germans, alone, of our inhabitants were well organized, they would continue in allegiance to Germany for, to such as he, it was inconceivable that there could be any bonds to hold them to America, which, after all, is but an accidental agglomeration of races and people among whom no deliberately planned cult of nationalism had been fostered.

Character of Population

How America with its lack of linguistic and racial homogeneity responded when the test came is the most glorious chapter in the history of our marvelous nation of assimilates. In order that the response made might be fully evaluated, requires an understanding by both the American and the Americanized of the immensity of the problem of the unification of the mind and spirit of the population of our land. It is indeed a problem to make Americans of these surging, ebbing, responsive, sullen, singing, cursing, sorrowing, carousing, harmonious, disputatious elements, some coming from lands of liberal thought others from age-old autocracies—all of them with dreams of a more or less realisable Utopia, which the magic word "America" spells to them. America means to the idealist, the full opportunity to express himself, free institutions, religious and political liberty for self and descendants, whereas to the materialist it signifies the attainment of individual ambitions, economic advantage, escape from the military and tax burdens of the old world.

The immigrant leaves behind intolerance in religion, autocratic rule, heavy burdens of government, a hard and fast class system, severe military service, a perpetual struggle with poverty.

But has the foreigner crossed the bridge to America empty-handed? Is there nothing of value that he has brought that will help in moulding him into the ideal American—real or hypothetical—whom we have set up on a pedestal and want the foreigner to imitate even if we don't do it ourselves? We are often like the old school-master who said, "Don't do as I do, but do as I tell you to do."

Walt Whitman has well said in his poem "Pioneers, Oh Pioneers"—

"All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer, mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers, Oh Pioneers!"

The foreigner gives up forever, in most cases, all his former haunts with all the attendant sacrifice and strikes out into the new, untried world of America.

Evaluating the Foreigner

What does the foreigner bring? First of all he brings himself. "But what is that?" the restrictionists and anti-immigrationists among you will say. It is strong, robust, perfectly healthy, perfectly formed bodies for one thing. Our immigration laws keep out all who are physically unfit.

The case of a twelve-year-old flatfooted boy who was refused admission on account of weak physique, though all the rest of the family came in, is an example of the strict severity with which the physically unfit are excluded.

Another case was that of an Austrian cavalry officer who was debarred because of bow legs caused by riding horseback. Otherwise he was perfect physically. One wonders what would happen if certain native Americans ever got out of the country and had to depend on passing immigration restrictions to get back.

Of the males of militia age, 18 to 44 years, in the United States in 1910 the total was 20,473,684. Nebraska's foreign born population totalled 176,662 of whom 102,330 were males, but not all citizens by any means.

Ten or twelve years ago Broughton Brandenburg, in a work entitled "Imported Americans", advocated keeping a card index of all foreigners. His plan would have averted many of the difficulties which our government encountered during 1917 and 1918. The text noted also suggested the following valuable plan:

"To the card-index system should be added a regulation compelling all aliens to report, at regular intervals, their where-

abouts and pursuits, to federal officials in federal judicial districts, until such time as they become citizens of the country or are ready to depart. A most important feature of this should be the indexing and tabulation of the hundreds of thousands of able-bodied men who have had the excellent military training of the armies of Europe, and would, if properly organized, constitute a fine reserve force in America of at least 2,000,000 men."

Immigrants come at the best and most useful, most productive age. The immigration laws keep out aged, infirm and those likely to become a public charge. In intrinsic or physical worth to the United States, they are a rich addition. An Italian economist figured each able-bodied man at the age of twenty-one has cost the state from $1,500 to $1,800 to raise to maturity. At that rate in one year, say 1907, the United States was enriched by $2,040,000,000 at the cost of the countries which had brought up these immigrants and without a cent of expense to the United States. The great majority of men of foreign birth had some military training before they came to this country.

His Industrial Value

American economists figure that the new immigrant labor adds a billion dollars in value to the industrial energy of th country annually. This immigrant labor includes thousands of women. The strikes, the stringency in the labor market, the excessive high wages demanded and paid are traceable to the lack or falling off in immigration as well as to the withdrawal into the army of native born. If your domestic help should strike, you would have no recourse, for the foreign born are not coming in great numbers now. But after the war, look out for a great influx, particularly of women. The foreign born woman is already affecting the industrial situation in this country. She will be ten times the factor in industrial problems after the war.

Exploiting Foreign Female Labor

The sweating system is not tried on the American born woman. It is the foreign woman or girl who must sit late into the night in a miserable, ill-smelling room where the cooking, washing and sleeping is done, and sew for starvation wages on

men's and women's suits, shirtwaists, etc., in order that a big Christian (?) department stores may advertise sales of suits at $14.98 and shirtwaist bargains at 69c.

Thomas Hood, writing in England, many years ago, voiced the dirge which so many thousands of our exploited foreign born workers echo in

"THE SONG OF THE SHIRT"

With fingers weary and worn,
  With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
  Plying her needle and thread,
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
  In poverty, hunger and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,
  She sang the "Song of the Shirt."

Oh, men, with sisters dear!
  Oh, men, with mothers and wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
  But human creatures' lives!
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
  In poverty, hunger and dirt,
Sewing at once with a double thread,
  A shroud as well as a shirt.

In January of 1916 the Illinois Senate Committee reported that immorality among women in cities was chiefly due to poverty. The lack of a minimum wage for women and girls and of regulated conditions of domestic employment rendering the home in many cases a breeding place for commercialized vice, is what causes so many recruits to the underworld.

The exploitation of labor, particularly of women and girls, needs to be investigated as well as the fate of those thousands of foreign girls who are annually lost enroute to their destinations. Grace Abbott's investigations showed that in one year nearly two thousand immigrant girls who left New York City for points in the West never reached their destinations.

From the standpoint of money value of the immigrants, the government reports show that in 1914, a normal year, there were 1,218,480 immigrants who brought with them over $42,553,266.00. Of this amount the 9,928 Bohemians who came over

brought $404,968. The amount of head tax collected in the year ending June, 1914, was $5,092,894. Of this but $2,645,000 was spent on the immigration bureau. There are now or ought to be in the United States immigration fund at least $10,700,000.

Mental Equipment of Foreigner

The immigrants bring healthy, clear minds. This does not necessarily mean they are literate, but they are capable of being taught. The immigration laws keep out the mentally deficient most effectively. Illiteracy is a problem of the first generation only. The children of foreign born parents show relatively less illiteracy than the children of native born parents.

It was an American child in an old community in Kentucky who, when told that her mother was calling her and the other children with her, answered: "Her ain't a callin' we, us don't belong to she."

More foreign women than men are illiterate. Nebraska gets few of the illiterate nationalities. The United States Commissioner of Immigration reports that the Scandinavians show the fewest people who cannot read or write, the English and Bohemians come next in the roll of honor, the Scotch and Irish third, the Germans about sixth. The South Italian shows heaviest illiteracy, about 60 out of every 100 being unable to read or write.

Moral Delinquency

Does literacy make for morality? Immigrants as a general thing commit only minor offenses, crimes of ignorance. The high crimes are usually committed by literates, often very well educated. Professor Paul Peirce of the State University of Iowa says: "One must take into account what facilities these immigrants had for learning. The 3 per cent of literates from Germany are not as promising a proposition as the illiterates of Southern Europe because they have had their opportunities and passed them by, whereas the illiterate immigrant from a country where reading and writing were not easy to obtain may make himself a far more valuable citizen."

Real Culture of Foreign Groups

On the other hand, millions of immigrants come from lands and nations whose culture is of exceedingly ancient date. The western Slavs are among the earliest nations of Europe to become cultured. The first university in central Europe was established by the Bohemian or Czech people in Prague, Bohemia, in 1348, fully fifty years before the very first German university came into existence. The Polish people had a fine university established in Cracow as early as 1380.

Komensky or Comenius, the eminent educational reformer, who likewise planned and made the first illustrated school textbook in the world, was a Czech. The first regular newspaper in the world was published in Prague in 1515. The first art school in central Europe was established in Prague, Bohemia. The first and therefore the oldest girls' school or seminary in the United States was founded by members of the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren Church, who had fled to this country to escape religious persecution. The excellent schools in Bethlehem, Nazareth and Lititz, Pennsylvania, were all Moravian institutions. The first map of the New England colonies as they existed in 1630 was made by a Czech colonist, Augustine Hermann of Maryland.

Some authoritative historians state that a Polak, Jan of Kolna, Mazur, in command of a Danish ship, discovered America, in the region of Labrador, in 1476, preceding the Columbian trip by sixteen years. J. Conway, in his history of higher education in America, states this: "As early as 1659 the Dutch colonists of Manhattan Island hired a Polish school-master for the education of the youth of the community."

Political Freedom

Formerly the foreigner brought ideals of political liberty. Now, it can truly be said that the adherents of governments which are autocratic, paternalistic and imperialistic in tendencies must come to the United States to learn what is true political freedom. But back in 1848, it was the educated liberals of France, Germany, Poland and Bohemia who brought democratic and constitutionalist ideas here. From various periods in our

history, one can cull such names as that of the Frenchman Lafayette; the Poles, Pulaski and Kosciuszko; the Hungarian, Kossuth; the Bohemian, Karel Jonas (Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin and founder of the first Bohemian paper in the United States); the German, Carl Schurz, none of whom can ever be forgotten by Americans.

The socialistic Democratic party in Bohemia, as elsewhere, is bringing about suffrage for women. This party elected a woman to the national parliament—Bozena Vikova Kuneticka. It was the first instance in central Europe of such progressivism. The Congress of the new Czechoslovak Republic contains eight women members.

Habits Worth Imitating

What else do the foreigners bring with them as a contribution to American civilization? They bring habits of thrift and economy, settled, permanent attached-to-the-soil ideals. Not the shifty here today and gone tomorrow, easy-going way of the average native of small means. Being a tenant in rented quarters is not typical of the average foreigner.

In a government investigation made by Jenks and Lauck, (p. 280), of 17,628 families, the heads of which were employed in the principal divisions of mining and manufacturing enterprises, it was shown that of 1,187 families, native born of native father, white, 259 (21.8%) owned homes; of 788 families, native born of foreign father, 202 (26.6%) owned homes; of 15,511 families, foreign born of native father, 3,306 (21.6%) owned homes. (p. 281.) The Bohemians and Moravians show the largest proportion of home-owning families, of all races, the heads of which were native born of foreign father, or foreign born.

Another proof of the thrift of foreigners is shown by the post office department. Of $13,000,000 deposited in the postal savings banks of New York City, more than $11,000,000 are owned by foreign born residents, the Russians having by far the largest total on deposit. The foreigners come over with the habit of using the postal savings bank firmly ingrained. The

native American prefers to put his money where it is not so safe, but where it will draw big interest.

A certain class of native born are much like Rastus Johnson and his family who had received plentifully of charity, even to outfitting the house with a coal burning stove. One hot July afternoon Rastus and his family of nine started out all togged out in their best. One of their benefactors happened to meet them on the road. "Well, Uncle Rastus, where are you going, all dressed up?" "Well, boss, doan' you know the circus am come to town? We done sol' the heatin' stove you gave us 'cause winter am fur off, but de circus am here."

There are people, you know, who move every time the rent comes due. It is a fact that there are thousands in this country who mortgage their farms and dwellings in order that automobiles may be bought. Rarely does the foreigner risk the loss of a necessity for a luxury or pleasure.

S. W. Strauss states in "Leslie's": "In the United States 66 out of every 100 people that die leave no estate whatever. At the age of 65, 97 out of every 100 in America are partly or wholly dependent upon relatives or the public for their daily bread, clothing and the roof under which they sleep. According to government statistics, 98% of the American people are living from day to day on their wages; a loss of employment would mean pauperism for all but 2%."

It is not the immigrants who are filling our poor houses. It is often erroneously stated that Europe dumps the inmates of its poor houses into our homes for paupers. This is untrue. The great majority of the foreign born in our poor houses have been in America from ten to twenty years before they were forced into homes of dependency. The Irish, who were most prominently represented of any foreign born people, are notably given to living in the present, generous in a degree detrimental to themselves, but fail to provide for the inevitable rainy day.

Support of Liberty Loans

A most enlightening commentary on the response of various nationalities in the United States to the Liberty Loan is shown in the report of the Treasury Department on "The Foreign Ele-

ment in the Third Liberty Loan." This is based on a Report of the Foreign Language Division of Federal Reserve Districts.

The records in the Third Liberty Loan of the various nationalities are significant only in so far as they show a relationship between the representation of each linguistic group in our population and their proportionate or disproportionate percentage response to the loan. In column 1 is seen the percentage in the foreign population of certain leading groups of our immigrants and in column 2 the actual number of each and in column 3 the amount each group subscribed to the Third Loan. The total amount subscribed by Americans of foreign descent is $741,437,000. It is estimated that this amount was subscribed by 7,061,305 individuals which represented 41½% of the total number of subscribers.

Foreign Group	Percent in Foreign Population	Number	Bonds Taken
Scandinavians—			
Swedish	4.5	1,445,869	$6,011,600
Norwegians	3.1	1,009,854	5,987,550
Danes	1.4	446,473	2,353,950
Latin and Greek—			
Italians	6.7	2,151,422	52,247,350
Greeks	0.4	130,379	6,638,700
French	4.2	1,357,169	2,107,850
Portuguese	0.4	141,268	1,711,150
Roumanian	0.2	51,124	272,100
Slavic and Lettic—			
Polish	5.3	1,707,040	37,583,700
Bohemian (Czechs)	1.7	539,392	31,750,550
Bulgarian	0.1	19,320	2,100
Slovenian	0.6	183,431	1,569,900
Russian	0.3	95,137	2,599,600
Ukrainian-Ruthenian	0.1	35,359	129,500
Serbian	0.1	26,752	142,150
Croatian	0.3	93,036	153,900
Lithuanian-Lettish	0.7	211,235	4,374,500
Germanic—			
German	28.5	8,817,271	87,295,000
Dutch-Frisian	1.0	324,930	80,200
Flemish	0.1	44,806	875,000

The Americanization of our so-called foreign element is more nearly accomplished than that of certain groups of the native born. Shortly after the first Liberty Loan drive began, in the home of a certain fashionable woman of Nebraska, this incident was related. A Bohemian woman who lived on a farm in a certain western county of the state where there had been drouths, had succeeded after four years in saving sixty dollars from her egg and poultry money, to buy herself a much-needed outfit of a dress, coat, hat and shoes. When the Loan was announced urging everyone to support the government against the Central Powers, this poor woman who had known all too well what it meant to live under the hated yoke of the Hapsburgs and who realized keenly the need of opposing so cruel and intriguing a power said in broken English, "Our America she need my sixty dollar more than I need new dress. I buy Liberty Bond and help America fight Austria in my same dress." When the sacrifice of this woman, who as much as any other woman longed to be well dressed, was related to the group, there was a momentary silence. Not one of those women had even made the shadow of a sacrifice in subscribing for bonds or for war activities. All had given from their abundance or "spare" funds and they felt the challenge of the Bohemian farmer woman's sacrifice. All but one. She was the hostess, the daughter of successive daughters of the early colonial period, American bred and born for generations. And this was her comment on the sacrifice made by the farm woman, in giving up her dreamed of gown: "My! How dowdy that woman must have looked in her old duds." It is true, alas, that Americanization, like charity, must in many cases begin at home.

There are still a few self-satisfied native flag flaunters who haven't caught the spirit or the meaning of Americanism, but they are loud in their denunciation of the "ignorant foreigner" who is willing to stake his last dollar in backing Uncle Sam's cause, for they, the ignorant (?), understand the significance of that cause far better than milady of Revolutionary ancestry or even the man on the street.

The immigrant brings with him habits of sticktoativeness—indomitable courage, grit. The early foreigners of Nebraska

stayed here through drouths, grasshopper plagues, scourges of all kinds. They had no relatives "back east" to go to, as did the native Americans. They had to stay and plug it out.

The immigrant brings habits of cleanliness, as a rule. Certain nationalities, to be sure, have a larger measure of these than do others. All of them, however, have ideas of municipal cleanliness, for in Europe cities do much of the cleaning that is here left for individuals to carry out. The dirt and filth and snow banks in most of our city streets and alleys would never be tolerated in the majority of European communities.

Italian and Polish women have come to Jane Addams in Hull House to ask for municipal wash-houses. They said quite truly that the kitchen of a tiny tenement is no place to wash. Russian women have come to urge the securing of covered markets. Even in the ghettoes of Russia, food is not allowed to be exposed to dust and dirt as it is in almost any city in the United States.

Feeling for Beauty

The immigrant brings his wealth of traditional folk lore and his native songs and stories. His vivid and colorful imagination added to the practical character of the American mind can and must produce wonderful returns in the native literature of this country.

The foreigner unconsciously is influencing our literature and thus helping to bridge the Atlantic. Writers of some of the best American stories, novels, and dramas, have been influenced by the force and value of immigrant types present in this civilization. Examples of these are: Israel Zangwill's "The Melting Pot"; Jacob Riis, "How The Other Half Lives", Edward A. Steiner, "Immigrant Tide", etc.; Willa Sibert Cather, "O! Pioneers" and "My Antonia".

It seems to me that the great or typical American novel which literary critics have been writing about for years will have for its theme, the Immigrant, the New American.

The immigrant's feeling for beauty of the visible or audible sort is an asset we can hardly evaluate in cold hard dollars and cents,—the spirituality, the idealism, the devotion and rever-

ence, the love of art and of music of the foreigner are necessary to make less sordid the merely materialistic prosperity of America. These inestimable contributions should not be crushed out in our effort to remake the immigrant, to shape him, overnight, so to speak, in the form of the kind of American who gets spoiled in the making. If, as Rev. Schauffler said, "American wages are the honey-pot that draws the bees," we must not stamp out those things in the foreigner which would make him only a beneficiary and in no degree a benefactor of the country which offers him economic profit.

In remaking the foreigner it is wise to recall Omar Khayyam's warning in Stanza XXXVII of his Rubaiyat:

> For I remember stopping by the way
> To watch a Potter thumping his wet clay
> And with its all obliterated Tongue
> It murmured, "Gently, brother, gently, Pray."

It ought to be on the conscience of Americans who have commercialized or industrialized the foreign born men and women of art instincts and art aptitudes and abilities. They have marred in the making many and many "luckless pots".

A certain prolific writer and lecturer of wide renown today, but for a more gentle "Potter" might still have been a coal miner in Illinois, Victor D. Brenner, designer of the Lincoln one-cent coin and now famous sculptor, might still have been digging ditches just as he did for a long time after he arrived from Russia.

Some American wit has said, "A grape fruit is a lemon that has had a chance." It isn't American to withhold that chance from any growing thing; why deny it to the foreigner who grows mentally and in worldly development by leaps and bounds from the instant the boat he comes in on sights the shores of "The American Continent?"

The foreigner's respect for age and for parental and governmental authority is another characteristic valuable enough to be imitated without evil results by certain of our American young people. Mary E. McDowell very pertinently says, "The too rapid Americanization of the children of foreign born parents

in the United States into pert young people without respect for authority is a dangerous problem."

Religious Freedom.

The immigrant has brought with him ideals of religious liberty. It was ideals of that character which in 1620 actuated the Puritans to leave England, the Huguenots to fly from France, the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren to escape their persecutors and flee to America. These Bohemian and Moravian Brethren organized the first and therefore the oldest girls' seminary in the United States, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and they, too, founded the famous old Linden Hall and other classical schools in Nazareth and Lititz, Pennsylvania.

Later it was the Jews flying from Russia, the Armenians escaping the bloood-thirsty Turks, who sought refuge here.

Of Nebraska's foreign element, the majority of the Germans and Scandinavians are Lutherans, whereas the Poles and many of the Czechs and Slovaks are Roman Catholics. There are also Protestants and "Liberals" among these latter two groups, even some "free thinkers". But it is eminently unjust to treat the foreigner as if he were a heathen and to regard all work done among immigrants as of a missionary nature. White foreigners come from Christian and even ultra-religious countries. The Czechs produced the marytr John Huss, who was the forerunner of Luther by over 110 years. Before Huss, they gave us the world Peter Chelcicky, from whom Count Leo Tolstoy claims to have gotten his ideas for simplicity in religious beliefs, also his principles of non-resistance. The Czechs were the first nation of Europe to dare to place on their throne a Protestant King, George of Podebrad.

Mistakes of Missionaries

All too frequently missionaries, colporteurs with good enough intentions doubtless, but minus tact and knowledge of the people they are attempting to serve, invade the homes of foreigners with centuries of religious belief behind them and talk "religion" to them or distribute tracts among them. In nine cases out of ten, it isn't tracts or talk of any sort that is needed,

but a job for the father, pure milk for the baby and decent living quarters for the whole family. The assumption of the "charity worker" or "friendly visitor" of some religious denomination, that the immigrant family is Godless, is rightfully resented as presumption by the struggling, but defenseless recipients of such tactless "calls". Altogether too many so-called social workers assume that poverty implies lack of religion. I have seen situations in which the immigrant victims of tract and sermonette distributors required a lot of Christian forbearance to refrain from an instant eviction of the "missionary" offenders. On the other hand, the "friendly visitor" who is trained intelligently and blessed with good sense as well as sympathy can and does give inestimable help to the cause of religion as well as Americanization.

The American church has not, until recently, lost its indifference to the immigrants, whereas, on the other hand, the churches conducted in foreign tongues have assiduously cultivated him. It has been little wonder that some communities in the United States remained German to the core when each generation was trained, more or less exclusively in that tongue, in youth in the parochial schools, in maturity hearing only services in that language and seldom or never coming in contact with English-speaking people of the same or allied religious faith. This condition existed in Nebraska, Minnesota and other states prior to the effective Americanization campaign of their respective Councils of Defense. The churches conducted in foreign tongues must be appealed to to aid the native church in building the bridge from Europe to America, over which our coming citizens must cross. There need be no loss spiritually to the devout who have worshipped in other tongues. God hears the English prayer fully as well as that breathed in German or any other tongue. Religions must not be used in America as a cloak for propaganda conducted in a tongue alien to the interests of American democracy. Also, it is not rare that a minister trained in some other language fosters it to the exclusion of English to make his own position secure with his congregation. Certain sects are maintaining foreign speaking preachers who misrepresent their own people, claiming they are in need of missionary

work done in a non-English tongue when their congregation could as well be reached in English.

Julian Warne severely criticizes the foreigners in the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania for holding celebrations and funerals on Sunday. It would truly be convenient to order one's death so as not to interfere with Sunday School. To harass the feelings of the non-working people by witnessing a miner's funeral appears to be regarded as almost a crime.

One recalls the incident of an undertaker who called at the home of a man in whose family some one was always dying. A little girl met the undertaker at the door and said, "If you want to know when the funeral is, don't bother any further. Pa always buries us at two o'clock."

Children of Foreigners Most Potential Contribution

The foreigners bring their children—raw material to be sure, but with what splendid possibilities—to be developed into the best we desire to have. These children must not be taught to look down upon their parents and the country from which they came. The most successful settlement workers are those who preserve and do honor to the beautiful customs and traditions of the various nationalities represented in the district.

It makes little difference whether Johnnie is of Scandinavian, Czech, Polish, German or other parentage, the ideal of his people is to give him the best future possible, just as it is the ideal of purely American parents for their own offspring.

The average American woman may have had a great many more advantages than her foreign born sister, but she cannot get away from the fact that they are both of much the same clay after all and have practically the same interests. Kipling wrote with understanding when he said:

> "For the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady
> Are sisters under their skins."

Schools Most Potent Agency

Provide schools for their children with sympathetic, understanding teachers—not the sort so full of overweaning, smug American spread-eagle self-esteem that they cannot see any good

in any other nation but this. Herbert A. Miller, in "The School and the Immigrant", says: "The success of the teacher in dealing with foreign children depends in no small measure on her personal relations with them. In order that the most effective work may be done, it is essential that the teacher should know something of the history and the characteristics of the different national groups."

At the same time the necessity of teaching English—thoroughly and sedulously—in every public and private school must be insisted on. Some of the states have no laws giving the State Superintendent of Public Instruction jurisdiction over the curriculum of private institutions of learning and he is thus handicapped in efforts to carry out an Americanization program among the most susceptible of our population—the youth of the land. This condition is notably true in Nebraska and certain other middle west states in which ensuing legislatures hope to remedy this defect. The standardization of English requirements in our schools, private, parochial as well as public, and the empowering of public officers to enforce this program must be insisted on by those who have sincerely at heart the Americanization of the second and third generation of immigrants' descendants. Such a program would not preclude the attainment of the modern languages by students, but it would make sure that all have had an equal opportunity to learn the language of our country and through this powerful medium have access to all that the English language offers of instruction in Americanization. This program would make impossible such conditions as those obtaining in Minnesota where 190 private schools were conducted wholly in German and the situation in Nebraska where in some schools the American national hymn had never been sung or the American flag never had been seen, but, on the contrary, "Deutschland uber alles" had been the favorite tune.

Newspapers

The purging of foreign language publications of all anti-American propaganda and the inauguration of a program encouraging assimilation would make the newspapers and magazines issued in some other language than English valuable agen-

cies in bringing about the American nationalization of the alien population. High class foreign publications whose American loyalty is undoubted could well be used together with the best of American magazines and papers in libraries, reading rooms, settlement houses, industrial workers' welfare quarters, and labor union stations.

Living Quarters

Provide clean dwellings to be rented out to the foreigner. Nothing Americanizes and gives a sense of self-respect to any individual, alien or otherwise, as to have clean clothes and to occupy clean, respectable quarters in a decently kept part of the city. How can we expect Mexicans, Italians, Greeks, living in discarded freight cars along a railroad line where they never come in touch with the American housewife's standards of cleanliness, to live up to that standard? Jack London asks fairly enough, "Can you feed or house a man worse than a dog is fed and housed and expect him to react like a man?" In 50% of the cases, it is not the foreigner who is to blame for the existence of the filthy hovels in which he is compelled to live. Very often these vicious dens are owned by hypocritical church members who exact a rental high enough to entitle the inmates of the house to a really decent abode. But—it's for foreigners—so no attempt is made by said "honorable citizen" to improve or make liveable the quarters of the immigrant. For my own collection I have taken dozens of kodak views of miners' huts in Pennsylvania, cheap tenements in New York, New Jersey, Cleveland, Chicago, Omaha and other places nearer home, owned by suave gentlemen who subscribe to foreign missions, but who absolutely refuse to spend a dollar to mend a leak in the roof or put a coat of paint on a bleak, rickety tenement in which so-called "Greenhorn" foreigners live.

Decent Wages

Give a living wage to foreigners for work well done. Don't give them something for nothing any more than you would to a native American. "Justice is greater than generosity." It is not necessary to do any sentimental gushing or gooing over

them. As a rule, they are a sensible earnest lot and cannot understand or else they resent mawkish sentimentality. Friendly sympathetic interest is welcome. They can all understand that, old and young, rich or poor. I recall my first day in an American public school. I did not understand a word the teacher said, but when she came to me and smiled at me and patted my cheek and put her hand softly around me, I understood fully and completely. I then and there resolved to do anything on earth for her. Everyone understands the language of friendliness and sympathy; we need no dictionaries or interpreters for those two qualities.

Just a little kindly interest is a wonderful cement for society—especially when the foreign born and the native born are to be welded together.

There are annually from 15,000 to 30,000 suicides in the United States—large numbers of them foreigners. Many, to be sure, are ill mentally or physically when they destroy their own lives, but many could have been saved, had just a little bit of sympathy been extended to them when the fit of despondency was on. We all get the so-called "blue devils" at times, but if there are friends and relatives about, how soon the clouds are dispelled. Yet a lonely, discouraged foreigner in a strange land is usually left to shift for himself.

Night Schools

Provide night schools with competent, sensible, practical instruction. Not the sort where mature men and women of foreign nationality, eager to learn a little useful English, drudge through such senseless drivel as this which was reported in an Eastern night school: "I am a little yellow birdie. I can sing. I can fly. Shall I twitter to you?" In another school this brilliant gem was drilled into the foreigners: "I see the moon, the moon sees me; God bless the moon, God bless me."

Teach English all the time, good, practical, every-day English, but please don't imagine even a foreigner has any use in his vocabulary for yellow twittering birdies and moonies that God blesses.

In another night school the students were memorizing paragraphs of the ancient history of Egypt, when not one knew even the name of the bordering states and only two could name the state in which they were attending school. Two knew the name of the president, none had even heard there was a governor. Provide citizenship classes for the benefit of aliens desirous of securing naturalization papers. These are the most important classes of all and should be conducted at all times, not merely just before an election. Employers are everywhere finding it possible and feasible to establish English classes for foreigners whose lack of knowledge of the language makes expensive accidents frequent in industrial plants. Such employers could go one step farther and see to it that the basis for a sound understanding of the privileges and responsibilities of sound citizenship be taught. Then there would never be such a meager conception of what citizenship involves as was displayed in the case of a certain Irishman who applied in Illinois for his first papers. The judge asked him:

"Have you read the Declaration of Independence?"

"No, Sorr," answered Pat.

"Have you read the Constitution of the United States?"

"No, Sorr," again was the answer.

"Well, then, what have you read?" queried the judge.

"I have red hairs on me neck, Sorr," calmly replied Pat.

A few elementary lessons in citizenship would not hurt Pat and thousands more like him who apply for "papers", and the sacred privilege of suffrage.

The foreign born women also must be helped in this respect. Most of our foreign born women belong to some organization, in most cases an association with insurance features, and are good at "getting up" movements. If some attempt is made to come in touch with them, they will respond. Of course, one must not approach them with the air, "Now I'm going to do you an immense favor. I'm above you, but I'm going to overlook it this time and condescend to your level." I always recall a passage from Henry David Thoreau, the American philosopher, who once wrote that if he knew someone were coming to do him a favor he would run to the very end of the world to avoid being made the victim of such a consciously good deed.

The lack of success attained in reaching the foreigners is accounted for by just that attitude. A fashionable woman who, because she had time and an automobile, had been appointed on an Americanization committee by the mayor, said in my presence: "Well, dear me, this morning, I must go down again to see those people I'm Americanizing. They're just too stupid to appreciate what I'm doing for them."

"Going **down** to **those** people" is the whole secret of the numerous failures of untrained "Americanizers(?)"

The women of Czech blood of the United States have several important benevolent insurance organizations, among them being the Jednota Ceskych Dam, with 27,000 members; the S. P. J., with 30,000, etc. The Polish, Slovak, Croatian and German women have similar organizations. Most of the Scandinavian organizations are affiliated with churches. From active membership in the Czech federations I know that the American National Hymn is the opening song in the lodge meetings. And the members always show homage by arising.

One can secure the co-operation of these organizations for public undertakings for it has been done again and again. At the Community Christmas tree program in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, hundreds of women joined the native born club women in sewing sacks of candy, nuts and oranges and helped as well in canvassing the merchants for the supplies. At the semi-centennial celebration, in planning for school gardens, in hospital donations, in charity organization work, they assisted. Not all of them, to be sure, but a sufficient number to insure an increase of interest next time on the part of others.

In Cleveland, Ohio, the largest Red Cross chapter is made up of Czech women who have turned over immense quantities of supplies and entered heartily into every community undertaking having for its purpose the preservation of American unified spirit against the disrupting propaganda of Teutonism.

Another way of bridging the Atlantic is through community singing, which is an excellent means of reaching and holding the foreigner in united interest. Singing with your neighbor, holding a song book with a perfect stranger who is singing the same song you are—these are the means of establishing a closer understanding and a deeper sympathy in matters of far more

moment than the mere physical act of singing America, The Star Spangled Banner, Auld Lang Syne, Swanee River, Old Kentucky Home.

Mediums of sympathetic co-operation with foreign born women are offered at county fairs, baby week exhibits, clean-up days. Women whose sons, brothers and husbands went to war fraternized in preparing needs for soldiers at the front or in camps, in the civilian relief departments of welfare and war organization, in learning how to conserve and can foods, in organizing War Savings Clubs, Parent Day Programs at schools and neighborhood houses. Clubs could extend invitations to foreign women to their open meetings and could remember in other ways their sisters with fewer advantages. There are too many incidents like that of the woman whose baby died and to whom a teacher in a local school brought flowers—the gift of the school children. The woman at first clung to the flowers which were to ornament the coffin of her dear one. Then she thrust all but one flower back and said, "Take the roses to Mrs. Kozminsky across the alley; her baby ain't dead yet."

The mingling of men of foreign stock with those of native blood has been accomplished in a thoroughly democratic way in the ranks of our army of four million men. No single agency in the last half century has done as much as the United States Army to bring men of distinctively American ideals in close touch with those of foreign birth or blood. That all the patriots in the American Army who fell for the cause of justice were not of native ancestry is proven by the names in the casualty lists which show a startingly large percentage of men of foreign stock. It will be a tremendously interesting study to note that certain groups of foreigners gave heavily of men who enlisted long before the draft law became effective.

The working together of these tens of thousands of men in a common cause against a common enemy has served better than any other one medium in unifying the spirit of America. The preliminaries to a genuine and effective Americanization have been accomplished. Our soldiers have "bridged the Atlantic" not only in fact, but in the theoretic and symbolic sense. Our soldiers returning will understand much better of how the other half lives and what they have to offer to our citizenship. They

are going to be kinder, but firmer; more sympathetic, but less lax; gentler, but more just, in their administration of all that pertains to the foreigner within our gates.

Among the citizenry at home the wholesale support of the campaigns for the aid of the soldiers in the camps has shown that unity is the underlying aim of America, for in such "drives" as the Red Cross, the United War Work Fund and others, the breaking down of man-made barriers of society and religion has been notable particularly in the sweeping away of prejudice between Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, Sectarianism and Sectionalism in general. When Patrick Henry said, "I am not a Virginian, but an American," he prepared the way for the millions who were to come later to assert as effectively, "I am not a national of this or that European country, but I am an American."

The tower of Babel loses its menace of the many-tongued millions in the universal spirit of those who blend of their own free will in the likeness of the ideal American.

To seek and acknowledge the good that other nations have achieved as well as to be proud of our own attainments is the aim of the true American. To shut one's eyes to the attainments of people in other lands is worse than provincialism, it is an affliction.

It may be true that one nation's accomplishments in some field excel those of another, yet to know what that other has also contributed to the sum total of the world's culture is to know the whole truth. "Above all nations is humanity," say the Cosmopolites, and "Above one nation's truth is Truth, pure and simple." John Huss over five hundred years ago wrote, "Hear the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, keep the truth, guard the truth until death." What we need is not, as a Japanese student remarked, "English truth, French truth, German truth, but Truth."

President Wilson said in his Flag Day address at Washington, June 14, 1916: "When the world finally learns that America is indivisible, then the world will learn how truly and profoundly great and powerful America is." This indivisibility can come only as a result of the acceptance of the integral truth of the nations which have given to us of their children.

Becoming an American is not the mere adoption of American citizenship, but the actual and complete adjustment of the immigrant to the American economic, social and moral standards and methods. Americanization has been accomplished only when the immigrant feels and thinks like an American and as a result acts like an American. Being an American is a state of mind, a matter of the ideals one holds and lives up to.

The Americans will always welcome to these shores those foreigners whose purpose it is to keep the oath of allegiance which they pledge to this country of their adoption. This government will receive with open arms those who intend to think and feel and act like Americans. Thinking and acting together on the essential principles which represent democracy, indivisibiliity in loyalty to the flag—living and letting live, giving "a square deal", that should be the final test for the real American and in this way we can truly bridge the Atlantic.

Can we not mould into the American ideal the art and unboastful pluck of the French; the sense of beauty of the Italian; the idealism and devotion, despite every sorrow of the Slav, be he Russian, Czech, Pole or Serb; the steadfastness of the Scandinavian; the liberal democracy of the English; yes, even the merely material efficiency of the German? Will not the transfused metal made up of all these splendid constituents become the purest gold? Shall not the perfect Alchemist make of these human ingredients the most gifted and most useful of his creatures? The American spirit of live and let live shall absorb and harmonize all elements—and the alien of yesterday will be the American of tomorrow.

Recommendations

The use of the English language as a common means of communication.

Organization

Organize Commission consisting of Mayor, School Superintendent, Chamber of Commerce, heads of all industrial establishments employing foreign born labor, all heads of social service agencies, representatives of all foreign groups, representatives of Labor Bureau, United States Bureau of Naturalization. This commission should appoint sub-committees, each of which would be responsible for some one division of the work.

1. **Night Schools**

Establish night schools in the centrally located public schools.

(a) Secure capable teachers, sympathetic, resourceful, energetic, strong social spirit. Have same teacher in charge of day classes and visiting of foreign women.

(b) What to teach:

(1) Teach English, speaking, reading, writing.

(2) Teach History, local, state, American, world, current events.

(3) Teach civics, meaning, privileges and responsibilities of citizenship.

(a) Local organizations, health, fire and public departments.

(b) State organizations.

(c) Federal organizations.

(4) Teach Geography.

(5) Teach Arithmetic, Book-keeping.

(6) Teach Stenography, Typewriting.

(c) Aim to secure socialization of High School.

(d) Success measured by regularity of attendance.

(e) Time: Advanced classes, two times weekly; beginning classes, three times weekly.

2. **Afternoon Classes for Immigrant Women**

(a) Personal visits of real help to homes of foreigners.

(b) Two hour sessions, one for speaking, reading and writing English; one for sewing, cooking, sanitation, demonstration, stereopticon views.

3. **Industrial Establishments**

(1) Noon sessions.

(a) Preferably after lunch and before work is resumed, five minutes community singing.

(b) Five minute talk on some phase of city life.

(1) Sanitation, city, home.
(2) Avoidance of fire and accidents.
(3) First Aid.
(4) Home for orphans, aged, etc.
(5) Use of public library.
(6) Significance of impending elections.

(c) Talk on some phase of industry.
Illustrations.
Employment agencies.

(2) Healthful recreation.

(a) Games, sports.
(b) Dances, properly directed.
(c) Singing clubs.

(3) Economic.

(a) A decent wage for men and women.
(b) No discrimination against foreigner in wage for work equal to that of native born laborer.
(c) Safety appliances in factories and mills.

4. **Public Libraries**

Special attendants to show to the foreign born uses of library, book shelf system, newspaper and magazine racks. Books and magazines in foreign tongue on American subjects. Throw out anti-American papers and articles. Make the place attractive and not a scene of awesome fear. Special art and book exhibits of different national groups.

5. **Trade Unions**

Urge foreign born members to attend citizenship and night school classes, to take out naturalization papers. Distribute information and helpful pamphlets on significance of American institutions.

6. **Churches**

Invite foreign born to affiliate, but not in spirit of missionaries. Make them feel at home. There will then be fewer at the public houses which **do** make them feel at home.

7. **Lodges, Organizations**

Special programs studying customs and histories of our allies and other governments. Sympathetic acknowledgement of achievements of each group.

8. **Child Welfare, Better Baby Tests and Contests, Mothers' and School Patrons' Clubs**

Secure as leaders women of all foreign groups represented in community. Also talks by physicians or specialists, if possible in the language of the foreigner, otherwise in simple, clear English.

9. **Canning and Sewing Classes**

If conducted by trained demonstration agents who have knowledge of foreign tongue, these short schools can be doubly useful as agencies of Americanization. Secure attendance of all the women of foreign stock.

10. **Social Welfare Committees. Municipal Commissions**

(a) Inspect and report on housing conditions among foreign born. Municipal authorities can secure attention of landlords to sanitation and decent condition of tenants' dwellings.

(b) Laws against exploitation of foreigners on trains, steamboats, by employment agencies, savings associations, private banks, assessment insurance societies, steamship companies, corporations, securing contract labor. Correction of maldistribution or overcrowding of foreigners in certain districts.

(c) Municipal savings clubs, building and loan associations, supervised savings banks and insurance societies, encouragement of Postal Savings Bank.

11. **Recreation Agencies**

American sports are fine Americanizers. One well enjoyed game of baseball beats twenty sermons on citizenship in making a man grow into full-fledged happy Americanism. Give the foreign born some fun. A Slavic priest, in speaking of the mining element, said, "Our people do not live in America, but under

America." Let's give them a taste and knowledge of this great typical American game of baseball. Let them enjoy football, basketball, field sports, track, swimming pools. The theater and movies, with specially selected reels on American history, industries, traditions and ideals may be interspersed profitably between purely entertainment features.

12. **Speakers, Lecturers**

In native tongue, clear and attractive discussions on public questions, American history and institutions, duties and privileges of citizens, need of team work, and dangers of demagogues and of class-hatreds.

Statistics of Foreign Born in Nebraska

Nebraska's foreign born population in 1910 was 176,662 in a total population of 1,192,214. Of the foreign born 57,302 were born in Germany; 24,362 in Austria, 23,219 in Sweden; 13,674 in Denmark; 13,020 in Russia (these being chiefly Germans); 8,124 in Ireland; 8,009 in England; 7,335 in Canada (675 French Canadians); 3,799 in Italy; 3,459 in Greece; all other countries, 14,359.

Only twelve states in the Union have more Germans than Nebraska, which therefore is thirteenth in the matter of German population. It is eleventh in Scandinavian population; twentieth in Irish population; thirteenth in number of natives of Austria-Hungary; nineteenth in natives of Russia and Finland; twenty-second in number of natives of England, Scotland and Wales. There were 5,166 individuals of Polish origin in Nebraska, over two-thirds of whom came from Austria and Germany.

68.1 per cent of Nebraska's foreign population was from northwest Europe and 26.6 per cent from southern and eastern Europe.

Omaha had in 1910 in its total population of 124,096 a total of 27,179 foreign born, chiefly from Germany, Sweden, Austria-Hungary and Russia. South Omaha, which since 1910 has been annexed to Omaha, had a population of 26,259, of whom 8,021 were foreign born, with Austria in a small lead, although every foreign country is fairly represented. Lincoln, in a total population of 43,973, had 7,218 foreign born, most of whom are from Germany or the German settlements of Russia.

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